

Confidentiality Policy

Current version approved: June 2009
Next refresh due 2010

1. All staff and volunteers of the Trust will regard all information that they may acquire as a result of involvement in the Trust's affairs as confidential to themselves, whether this information be about individuals or organisations. No confidential or equally sensitive information so acquired may be passed on by any means to any person or persons outside the Trust unless in a case of grave concern or emergency where there is a clear need for the prevention of harm.
2. The term "volunteers" in this Policy includes Trustees.
3. Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 4 and 5 below, staff and volunteers who find themselves placed in any kind of client relationship with any individual as part of their work for the Trust will preserve absolutely the confidentiality of the client under the operating protocols laid down by the Trustees for volunteer and employee conduct (including this Policy, the Protection Policy, and the Staffing Manual).
4. In particular, the welfare of children and young people is paramount under the Children Act and under the Trust's Protection Policy, which applies equally to vulnerable adults. The Trust will not break any young or vulnerable client's confidence to any external agency or person, including a member of the family, without that client's informed consent, though in cases where there is a clear risk of harm the Trust staff and volunteers must be guided by the provisions of the Trust's Protection Policy.
5. All Helpline and Advocacy staff and volunteers must scrupulously ensure that they do not give out any information about an advocacy client or helpline-caller to anyone unless the client or caller has authorised them to be given this information.
6. Similar and equal care will be taken by Lynx South West project staff and volunteers in relation to the independent frontline groups and projects in the peninsula and the individuals who are the representatives, facilitators, members, contacts etc. of these groups and projects.
7. No employee or volunteer for the Trust shall be placed in a client or helpline relationship with any person unless they have been made fully aware of the Trust's relevant policies and protocols and shall have a clear line of supervision leading to the Executive Director and then to a named member of the Board of Trustees.
8. In dealing with all issues of confidentiality the Trustees shall always be guided by what is in their opinion the best practice currently available to them as a model.

9. Any breach of this Policy will be regarded as a very serious act and may be treated as a disciplinary offence punishable after due process by any lawful and appropriate sanction up to and including dismissal.

10. The officer responsible for the implementation and mainstreaming of this Policy shall be the Executive Director, who shall also provide for it to be reconsidered and updated as necessary.

I have read and understand this policy, and I undertake to observe it carefully at all times.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name _____

Signature of supervisor or volunteer co-ordinator: _____